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TRADES-UNIONISM AND MILITARY TRAINING¹

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FUNDAMENTALLY, consideration of the military obligations of citizenship with special reference to the question of compulsory versus volunteer military training and service and of what basic methods may be best followed for the common defense, rests upon the broader subject of war itself—how best to prevent war and how to be adequately prepared, if this nation should become involved in war.

There is an enormous force of public sentiment in the United States for peace. Every true American stands for peace and the settlement of domestic and international questions without force of arms. No true American, however, wants peace at any price. To glorify peace at the sacrifice of ideals of human justice, freedom, and democracy, is cowardice. Resistance to injustice and tyranny and low ideals is inseparable from the virile fighting quality that has given purpose and force to ennobling causes in all nations. Our own freedom and republican form of government has been achieved by resistance to tyranny and insistence upon human rights. Only a people willing to maintain their rights and to defend their freedom are worthy of these privileges.

War is not necessarily bad. It all depends on what war is about. The war of Colonials, for instance, to win independence from England was a just and wise war. The American Federation of Labor at the Philadelphia convention declared itself in full accord with the fundamental principle, the sentiment of which appeals to the higher instincts and ennobling attributes of mankind, that independence, liberty and justice for all mankind are paramount under all circumstances. Or-

¹An address delivered at the evening session of the Academy of Political Science on May 18, 1916.

ganized labor distinguishes between wars of conquest and wars for redress of wrongs, holding that back of all wars for conquest is the spirit of brutality, greed and commercialism, and that back of all wars for redress of wrong is the spirit of independence, liberty, justice, democracy. The former organized labor condemns under all circumstances; for the latter, organized labor has not a word of condemnation. Patriotism—a love for and devotion to, one's country, a preference for its people and customs, a just pride in its excellences—is undoubtedly a good thing. It is only a family pride on a large scale. Like all virtues, if carried to excess, it becomes a vice. While organized labor believes in adequate preparedness, it does not favor—indeed it is emphatically opposed to—any plan which will ultimately establish a Germanic militarism in this country.

The European war has revealed a new danger inherent in modern militarism. This war has demonstrated that warfare is becoming more a matter of mechanics and labor; engineers, chemists, mechanics, trench-diggers and laborers are fighting the war of Europe. Military tactics include industrial organization, and every plan for the development of political power includes a plan of industrial organization. Every military plan looks to some form of coercion—not only military conscription, but industrial conscription. The ideal of military leaders is a great organization of workers under the control of the army, disciplined, taught to respond and obey. These men would be ready for war if war were desired. In time of peace, they would be occupied on great industrial projects, under the direct control of the army. If that is so, then the militarism of the future means not only an enormously increasing expenditure on armies and navies; it means also the value of men and women will be reckoned according to their capacity as money-makers and as breeding machines. This prospect is not an encouraging one for the workers, or for those striving against commercialism and materialism and for the higher ideals of human progress.

The workers recognize that rights carry with them obligations and duties. It is the duty of those who live under free

institutions to maintain them unimpaired. A duty dependent upon the maintenance of right, in some respects a correlative duty, is that of serving the state or nation as a soldier.

That some citizens are able and willing to serve in the capacity of soldiers is an axiom of government. How far any one can against his will be forced into military service is a question which closely touches every man's liberty of action. While there may have been for centuries a vague acquiescence in more or less compulsion in military service, compulsory military service is now neither legal, constitutional, nor justified. The finding of men for military service has rightfully become and should remain nothing more than an ordinary contract of service, which one may accept or refuse at discretion. Organized labor favors voluntary military service maintained by means of enlistment and is unalterably opposed to a revival of a compulsory system. That many nations, especially ancient and medieval, have in desperate time of fortune resorted to compulsory military service should scarcely be deemed a lawful or meritorious origin for an American rule of law. All the wisdom invoked from precedents of law and practise of nations ancient and modern can never extenuate the essential injustice and tyranny of seizing one class of men and making them slaves to all the rest. The assumption that compulsory military service is the only efficient method permitting the nation's defense is on cursory reflection baseless, though it is the kind of a plea to which absolute power has resorted in all ages. It is difficult to conceive that a nation, such as ours, which has fought so many successful battles for liberty, should even now consider the approval and enactment of a law which would establish compulsory service. Impressment was the ostensible cause of war between Great Britain and the United States in 1812, when it was said all the governments of Europe maintained such a right. To-day the best minds in England and France are calling the present European conflict a war upon militarism and are advocating a reduction of arms at its close. Is it possible that we Americans now seek to fall into their old error?

While armies and military preparedness are essential for

the nation's defense, the danger to American workmen is not so much a danger of invasion by a foreign government. The real danger to the workers comes from the hordes of helpless, underfed, illiterate foreign immigrants, brought into this country every year by the great manufacturing interests which want cheap and ignorant labor. Whenever American workers are drawn into the army and navy, and the industrial activities for its support are necessarily increased, a demand for more labor would serve only as an excuse for bringing in more low-paid and unintelligent workers, who would undermine the standard of living and make the real problem of the American workers more acute. Thus the question of immigration has a very close relation to this subject. It involves not only the question of an intelligent and enlightened citizenship, the development of a proper national spirit, but includes the vital problem of the American worker in his economic relations—his hope and ideal for a better life and condition of work. It is therefore essential that adequate defense be also provided to the American workers, during time of peace, against the constant invasion of foreign workmen.

To make an efficient army in modern times harmonize with all the demands of civil liberty, is doubtless one of the problems of our race and age and one most difficult to solve—forming, perhaps, with the problem of carrying out a high degree of individual liberty in large and densely peopled cities, the two most difficult problems of high patriotism and substantial statesmanship. Our people have never advocated the abolishing of the military arm of the government. The labor movement demands that the military forces of a government be so organized as to prevent their misuse and abuse as a medium of tyranny against the workers and their civil liberty.

Representing directly millions of organized wage-earners and indirectly millions of unorganized workers, the labor movement of America demands that certain fundamental principles should be observed, and that all policies and plans for defense should be determined by representatives of all the people. It is the working people who are most vitally affected

by military service in time of peace or war. The burden of fighting falls upon them. They have been the chief sufferers from war and militarism whenever that malicious system has fastened itself upon a nation. They are most concerned in safeguarding their civil liberty and in avoiding the evils of militarism disclosed by the experience of other countries. The labor movement asserts its right to representation in all committees, commissions or bodies making decision upon military action and defense. It demands democracy in all military organizations and institutions of the country. Absolute democracy in voluntary service for national defense will bind all together in an unselfish service and broaden and deepen that national spirit which constitutes the common life of our nation. It insists that military institutions must be democratically organized, democratically officered, and always under the control of men directly responsible to the citizens of the land. It holds that absolute democracy in voluntary service for national defense will have a vital and wholesome effect upon all other relations of life.

A general military organization of the people or "national guards" has been deemed by labor to be preferable to large standing armies. The following declaration made years ago clearly expressed the attitude of the American Federation of Labor on the subject.

A man who is a wage-earner and honorably working at his trade or calling to support himself and those dependent upon him, has not only the right to become a citizen soldier, but that right must be unquestioned.

The militia, i. e., the citizen-soldiery of the several states in our country, supplies what otherwise might take its place—a large standing army.

The difference between the citizen-soldiery of the United States and the large standing armies of many European countries is the difference between a republic and a monarchy—it is the difference between the conception of liberty and of tyranny.

While organized labor stands against the arbitrament of international or internal disputes by force of arms, yet we must realize we may not yet reach the millenium ; that in the age in which we live,

we have not the choice between armed force and absolute disarmament, but the alternative of a large standing army and small one supplemented by a volunteer citizen-soldiery—the militia of our several states.

The convention of the American Federation of Labor held in San Francisco in 1915 re-affirmed this declaration by refusing to adopt resolutions which called upon all workers to refrain from affiliating with any branch of the military forces.

While the American labor movement has thus for years approved the militia of our several states, the use and abuse of armed forces of the state in recent industrial disputes has been the cause for great apprehension among a large and growing number of workers. Too often has the control and action of the militia been frankly, bitterly and brutally partisan in industrial disturbances. At times the militia has been recruited from private guards and other employees of corporations involved in conflict with their employees and for no other purpose than to break their will and determination, in their struggles for an improved condition of life and work. In many parts of the country, our courts have permitted the militia, under color of so-called "martial law", to usurp their functions and defy the associations of the workers who resisted encroachment upon their rights. In many cases where the militia have been used but no labor disturbances were involved, the judiciary, almost without exception, has protested against the exercise of any arbitrary power and has almost uniformly attempted to limit that power. However, when labor disturbances were involved, the judiciary has uniformly upheld the power exercised by the militia, and in no case has there ever been a protest against the use of such power or any attempt to curtail it, except in Montana, where the conviction of a civilian by military commission was annulled.

Time and again, martial law has been declared in order to use the military arm of the state against the honest and laudable endeavor of the workers to maintain their rights and lib-

erties as citizens. Again and again has the writ of *habeas corpus* been denied in face of a direct prohibition by the constitution of the state and in spite of the fact that the courts were open and unobstructed, and without reference to the protest of the men whose freedom and liberties were involved.

In New York last summer, there was held a constitutional convention, and the committee on the Bill of Rights reported to that convention a recommendation providing in substance that no military tribunal shall exercise jurisdiction over a civilian while the regularly constituted state courts were open to administer justice. That the work of this convention failed of adoption by the people of the state of New York is beside the question. The fact remains that the State Militia or National Guard of New York immediately initiated a fight against this report and the Major-General wrote a letter to the chairman of the committee, in which he said :

The proposed amendment would seriously trespass upon the jurisdiction, established by necessity and custom, of two classes of military courts, namely, military commissions, and court-martial.

Can we wonder then, in the light of these pernicious practises by the militia, that there is quite a proportionate and growing number of men who are inclined to give no aid and comfort whatever to military organizations which foster and entertain and practise such infamous and treasonable doctrines? The drafting of rules for the conduct of the militia should not be left entirely to military authorities. Indeed, the subject of policing industry is not one for the army or the militia, and the armed forces of government should not be permitted to take part in the adjusting of industrial relations. As soon as the public is assured that enlistment in the army, or in the militia, is in defense of the country, and that the guardsman is not engaged as a deputy sheriff for the defense of employers in conflict with their employees; as soon as every worker is fully protected in his life, liberty, justice and pursuit of happiness, existing military organizations will be sufficiently enhanced as to make them attractive to the youth of

this nation, without compulsion of any kind, whether that compulsion be political or economic.

It is well to mention that organized labor views with strong disapproval the attempt at economic compulsion manifesting itself to-day in a number of places to increase enlistment in the army and the militia. Appeals directed by the officers of the militia to employers to "urge" their employees to "join" the militia, or to participate in military demonstrations smatter too much of the compulsory methods used years ago by employers in urging the workers to participate in political demonstrations and to vote for certain political parties. Organized labor resents such interference with their condition of employment and strongly condemns such compulsory practises.

Ancient laws seem to have contemplated a necessity and a duty in each citizen to be ready on any emergency to assist in war. Under these laws every man was bound to have certain armor in his house and a regular inquisition was made at stated periods. At the same time no man was held bound to go out of his shire unless a strong enemy suddenly came. Fathers and governors of children were bound to bring up those of tender age in the knowledge of shooting. Every town and city was required to have a butt for target practise. In all countries where personal freedom was valued, however much each individual was forced to rely on legal redress, the right of each to carry arms for his own protection in case of extremity was considered a right of nature, indelible and irrepresible. That the right to bear arms shall not be abridged is a fundamental principle of our government. However, this right has been abridged. The workers have been disarmed and their arms have been placed in the hands of private detectives and other irresponsible men in the employ of interests hostile to the hopes and aspirations of the workers and for the sole purpose of forcing them into submission. We find now, as then, the more this right is sought to be repressed the more it will occur. If there is any danger in this right being clung to as a vital condition of personal security and self-defense there are modes of taking proper precaution from

dangerous indulgence. A reversion to and an encouragement of this older practise would seem to be in furtherance of personal security and tend to quicken the impulse to national defense, whenever a common enemy presents itself.

After all is said and done, the human element—strong, healthy, intelligent, and liberty-loving men and women—is the most essential element and vital factor in the science and art of government during peace or war, just as strong, healthy, intelligent and liberty-loving men and women are the dominating factors in the sciences underlying all other relations of mankind, whether as individuals or as group. There must be a citizenship physically fit, ready and able to serve in the nation's defense. Physical training with knowledge and the ability to bear and use arms will not only result in preparing the people of the United States for a time of emergency, but will also have a wholesome effect upon the health and strength of the people during time of peace. Physical training fits the citizen for industry, for service in the work of nations, as well as for service in the defense of the nation. Training of this kind should be given through voluntary institutions, democratically organized and democratically controlled.

Our existing industrial and commercial life does not at present permit a full mental and physical development of manhood and womanhood. The majority of our citizens no longer live in the open. A restricted and confined life in the office, shop, factory or mine has had a most disastrous effect upon the physical development of the workers of this nation. No nation can possess endurance whose citizens bear the inevitable consequences of sweat-shop labor, long working hours, low wages, and insanitary conditions. The workers constitute the great rank and file of the citizenship of a nation. If they are underfed, partly clothed, physically stunted, they are a menace to the nation in time of peace and in time of war. That nation whose industries exploit human workers during time of peace will find its existence threatened during time of war, because of inability to produce supplies, and because of dearth of fit soldiers. Policies and institutions which conserve human life and which afford opportuni-

ties for the development of every citizen are the greatest safeguard of a nation.

Individual initiative and resourcefulness are of incalculable value to a nation. In war time every nation expects loyal support of its wage-earners. Organized co-operation on the battle-field and in the making of munitions is essential to a proper safeguarding of our national interests. Organized co-operation is likewise necessary during time of peace. A nation which fails to stimulate and to develop qualities which work for voluntary associated effort among the workers for the common welfare assumes a responsibility for national peril. It foregoes its right to a full and free patriotic sacrifice from its citizens. The workers—the citizens—must be protected in their condition of life and work and such protection must come from their own educated initiative. The nation should consist of men and women conscious of their own dignity, aware of their own powers, and intelligently prompted in following a course of action best intended to promote their interests. The wage-earners are entitled to take part in determining those matters which so vitally concern them and the nation.

Opportunities for physical training are not freely and readily available to all. Some definite national policy should be devised for physical training and physical preparedness of all citizens. Physical training for the youth is properly a part of educational work and could readily be given through our public school system and other auxiliary agencies. Training of this kind, however, should be of broad and humane ideals and general usefulness and not be narrowly specialized or dominated by the purpose of militarism. The school should do all possible to develop keen, ready minds and healthy bodies. The co-operative instinct which would result in willing obedience for the best interest of all proceeding from knowledge which is best, is the ideal which should inspire the training. The body of every child should be so trained in our schools as to develop him into full manhood. The mind of every child should be so trained as to know best how to protect and advance its individual and collective interest, to

determine right from wrong and should be instilled with a spirit to resent wrong and fight for every right.

To make sacrifices for America, we must be sure that our state in the country justifies it. To attain the requisite national spirit, it is necessary above all things to create a confidence in the equality and impartiality and fitness of the laws and their administration. This cannot be done, with reasonable men, unless they have some voice in settling those laws and moulding them to the necessities of the time. Much of the history of nations consists of a series of mistakes, made by legislators of all ages, as to things they have tried to compel people to do. The last hundred years seems to have been occupied in the discovery of the mistakes made and the successive efforts to retreat from false positions. Modern legislators now acquiesce in the conclusion that most of the old tasks were impossible which sought to compel absolute uniformity of thought and action and of social life. Most of the governments of the world, after centuries of experience, have learned that laws are made for the benefit of those governed as well as for those governing—and obviously rather more for the benefit of the governed. When laws are the fruit of choice and deliberation and a joint labor of the governed and those governing, and approach most nearly to self-made laws on both sides, this partnership of feeling and of self-interest engages all the prejudices of human nature in its service and thereby draws after it not only a willing obedience but a ready and immediate response to their protection, whenever threatened, no matter by whom. A government in which compulsion is least employed, is that which is most conformable to its true nature and most completely fulfils its duties to all of its citizens.

In concluding, it is fitting that I quote Mr. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Labor, in his interpretation of organized labor's attitude as expressed in an address at the 16th Annual Meeting of the National Civic Federation, on January 18th of this year:

There are no citizens of our country who are more truly patriotic
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than the organized wage-earners—or all the wage-earners—and we have done our share in the civic life of the nation as well as in the nation's wars. We have done our share to protect the nation against insidious attacks from within, that were directed at the very heart of our national life and would have inevitably involved us in foreign complications. The wage-earners stood unfalteringly for ideals of honor, freedom and loyalty. Their wisdom and their patriotism served our country in a time of great need. No one can question that the wage-earners of the United States are patriotic in the truest sense, no one can question their willingness to fight for the cause of liberty, freedom and justice. No one can question the value of the ideals that direct the labor movement.

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